131 Caspian at Fort St. Nicholas on the Astara. The eastern frontier, some 450 miles in length, is formed by the Caspian Sea from the Bay of Agrakhan to the River Astara.

Geographically Transcaucasia is so placed that, with the development of communications, it should reap considerable advantages from the commercial development both of northern Persia and of north-eastern Asia Minor.

(2) Surface, Coasts, and River System

Surface

133 Transcaucasia is divided across the centre from west to east by the two valleys of the Rion and Kura, the head-waters of which are separated by the low ridge of the Suram Mountains, connecting the Caucasus with the Armenian Highlands. These valleys run west and east into the Black and Caspian Seas respectively. They are roughly equivalent to the Governments of Kutais (the Rion valley), Tiflis, Elisavetopol, and Baku. The Governments of Kutais and Tiflis and parts of Batum form the region known as Georgia.

The Rion valley is narrowed in its upper part by the mountainous district of Svanetia, but begins to broaden west of Kutais, and becomes a flat, marshy plain. The Kura valley narrows about Tiflis, and then widens till, at the Mughan steppe, it is over 100 miles broad. The valley floor slopes gently east from 1,200 ft. at Tiflis to 500 ft. in the middle of its course, and 85 ft. below sea level at the Caspian. The only interruption is caused by a plateau of between 2,000 and 3,000 ft. along the southern foot-hills of the eastern Caucasus in the region known as Kakhetia.

134 The soil in the Rion and upper Kura valleys is extraordinarily fertile. On the southern slope of the Caucasus, in fact, almost every available patch of ground is successfully utilized for agriculture, even up to a height of 7,000–8,000 ft. Most of the steppes in the lower Kura valley are too dry to be cultivated without the aid of irrigation.

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The Caucasus range dominates the whole of Trans-caucasia. It is over 400 miles long, while its outskirts stretch for 150 miles and 100 miles respectively to Baku and Novorossiisk. It runs from west-north-west to east-south-east between 45° and 40° north latitude, and falls naturally into three well-defined sections: a western section from Anapa to the upper valley of the Kodor, not far from Sukhum; the main central section from the upper Kodor valley to Mount Kazbek; and an eastern section, including the Highlands of Daghestan, and extending from Mount Kazbek to Baku.

The *western* section commences with hills, which rise gradually to a height of 7,000 ft. at the source of the Kodor. The mountains fall abruptly to the Black Sea.

The *main central* section is entirely mountainous, the general elevation being within the limit of perpetual snow, which on the north side is 9,500 ft. and on the south 10,800 ft. The five highest peaks are Mount Elbruz (18,470 ft.), Koshtan Tau (16,539 ft.), Dikh Tau (16,925 ft.), Janga (16,660 ft.), and Kazbek (16,546 ft.); and there are many others over 14,000 ft. The chief passes are the Mamison Pass (9,253 ft.), across which runs the Ossetian Military Road, connecting Kutais with Vladikavkaz; and the Dariel Pass (4,122 ft.), over which the Georgian Military Road runs from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis. There are no large lakes, and few tarns.

The *eastern* section broadens as it approaches the Caspian, including on the northern side of the main range a triangular area known as the Daghestan Highlands. The country here is difficult of access, and only one military road leads up from the River Terek in Ciscaucasia, the eleven passes being mere bridle-paths. The general elevation of the main range rarely exceeds the line of perpetual snow, but there are three peaks of over 14,000 ft. From Shemakha the elevation declines rapidly; at Baku there are only low hills. The Gudam Pass, 7,977 ft., which forms the western limit of this section, is the best in Transcaucasia. Over the Vantliashet Pass runs the road from Petrovsk to Tiflis.

133 The Caucasus is joined to the Little or Anti-Caucasus by the Suram or Mezghian Mountains, a low range averaging 3,627 ft. in height, running from north to south and separating the head-waters of the Rion from those of the Kura.

The Little Caucasus is formed by the eastern and central part of the Russian Armenian Highlands, which occupy the southern half of Transcaucasia, and may be divided into two areas: the mountains which surround Lake Gokcha, of which the highest peak is Mount Alagez (13,436 ft.); and the mountain plateau lying to the west of these, including the plateau on which stand the towns of Alexandropol and Kars. The latter area is somewhat bleak and rugged and is intersected with numerous mountain streams in deeply cut valleys.

The western and southern parts of the Russian Armenian Highlands are composed of spurs of the Pontic Mountains and the Eghri Dagh Mountains. The latter divide the streams which flow into the Black Sea and Caspian from those which enter the Persian Gulf. There is a general elevation of 8,000 ft.; the mountains are bare of timber, have little water, and are very rugged.

The ranges composing western and southern Russian Armenia thus stretch from the south-east corner of the Black Sea 400 miles to the south-east, as far as the Kara Dagh and Salavat Mountains in northern Persia, which link them to the Elburz Mountains at the southern end of the Caspian.

Coasts

Transcaucasia includes about 400 miles of the Black Sea coast. From Cape Taman on the eastern side of the Straits of Kerch, as far as the roadstead of Anapa, the coast line is low and monotonous, with sunken reefs close to the shore. From this point south-east to Sukhum, there are steep cliffs, with deep water close inshore, and occasional beaches at the mouths of small rivers. From Sukhum to Nikolaevsk, south of Poti, the coast is low and flat; and inland from Poti there is

3: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1920 RH1 Caucasia RH1

an immense flat alluvial plain forming the delta of the 133
rivers Ingur and Rion. South of Nikolaevsk mountains replace the plain. For a few miles south-west of Batum the shore is formed by the flat delta of the Chorokh.

The eastern frontier of Transcaucasia extends for 450 miles along the Caspian Sea. From the Bay of Agrakhan to the small port of Petrovsk the coast is flat and inclined to be marshy. From thence to a few miles south of Derbent (Derbend) it is steep, but drops farther on to a flat area formed by the deltas of many small rivers. After another rise comes the long, low Apsheron Peninsula, off which there are several islands. From Baku the coast line trends south-west as far as Cape Vezir, beyond which is the Gulf of Salyani. The mountains then begin to approach the sea, and rise to a height of 6,000 ft.; they are thickly wooded to the water's edge.

River System

Most of the rivers are mountain torrents, and, with the exception of the wider and navigable portions of the Rion and Kura, they are all at times fordable. As a rule there is most water in them during the summer and least during the winter. The chief rivers are the Rion, Ingur, and Chorokh, flowing into the Black Sea, and the Kura with its affluents, the Alazan and Aras (Araxes), flowing into the Caspian.

The *Rion* (100 miles) rises between Koshtantau and Kazbek and enters the Black Sea at Poti.

The *Ingur* rises in the highest part of the Caucasus, in the north of the Government of Kutais, and flows in a south-westerly direction, reaching the Black Sea at Anaklia.

The *Chorokh* rises in Turkish territory, and only a small part of its course lies within Caucasia. It crosses the border from Turkish Armenia in the neighbourhood of the mountain region of Diduve, south of Artvin, and reaches the sea between Batum and Gonia.

The *Kura* (830 miles) rises in the high plateau north

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133 of Kars and flows north into the Kartalian plain. After turning east through Gori and Tiflis it follows a south-easterly course to the Caspian, which it enters by three mouths. During the months of March, April, and May it is flooded, and inundates the surrounding country at some points to a width of 3 miles. Its chief tributaries are the Alazan on the left bank and the Aras on the right.

The *Aras* (500 miles) rises in Turkish territory, entering Transcaucasia between the villages of Khorasan and Karakurt. It flows east till it is joined on the left bank by the Arpa Chai, passing through the Erivan plateau, and then takes a wide bend towards the south past Nakhichevan as far as Julfa, after which it turns east to Ordubad and then north-east, finally discharging into the Kura. The current is very rapid in the upper course, and also between Julfa and Ordubad, but is moderate from Erivan as far as Nakhichevan. There are many islands in the lower reaches.

In the Russian Armenian Highlands are the only important lakes in Transcaucasia: Gokcha, 540 square miles, at a height of 6,340 ft.; Chaldir, 33 square miles, at a height of 6,520 ft.; and several smaller ones, all at heights between 6,500 and 7,000 ft.

(3) Climate

132 It is possible to divide Transcaucasia into three climatic areas: the Black Sea basin, the Caspian basin, and the Armenian Highlands.

West of the Suram Mountains, which form a dividing line between the Black Sea and Caspian basins, the atmosphere is moist and temperatures are moderate. The winter is mild, and, though snow falls, it rarely lies; the summer is hot and conditions are unhealthy on the Black Sea littoral. The annual rainfall averages from 60 to 80 inches. Periodical changes of wind are not uncommon, and cause sudden alterations of temperature. The effect of the climate on the country is noticeable;

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131 on the south by the Caucasus and the Province of Daghestan; on the east by the Caspian Sea; and on the north by the Kuma-Manych depression, a chain of narrow shallow lakes and river beds filled at certain seasons with water, connecting the Manych, a tributary of the Don, with the Kuma, which flows into the Caspian Sea.

(2) Surface, Coasts, and River System

Surface

• 133 The parts of the Caucasus range which are included in Ciscaucasia are (1) the *Black Sea ridge*, 155 miles in length, stretching from Anapa on the coast to Mount Oshten (9,369 ft.). These mountains are covered with thick woods. (2) The *Kuban Caucasus*, 120 miles in length, which extends from Mount Oshten to Mount Elbruz. Here the heights vary from 3,000 to 6,000 ft. (3) The *Central Caucasus*, which contains various subdivisions, included for the greater part in Transcaucasia.

[487] The passes across the Caucasus from Ciscaucasia to Transcaucasia are few and are at high altitudes, varying from 9,000 to 12,000 ft. above sea-level.

The northern foot-hills of the Caucasus form on both sides of the River Terek the mountainous region of the Kabarda. North-eastwards from this stretches highland country, which merges into a depression northwards from Stavropol. Between these two there rises the isolated mass of the Beshtau Mountains.

The plains of Ciscaucasia slope gently from the base of the Caucasus Mountains towards the Kuma-Manych depression. In the centre is the Stavropol plateau, which varies in height from 2,000 to 2,500 ft. and separates the tributaries of the River Kuban from those of the Terek and the Kuma. Towards the foot-hills of the Caucasus the plateau is covered with dense forests; on the west it merges into steppes or ends in the reedy marshes of the Kuban delta. In the north

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and east the steppes towards the Caspian and the Kuma-Manych depression are barren and stony or sandy. 133

Coasts

The coast of Ciscaucasia is flat, and the only ports worth noting are Anapa, Temryuk, and Yeisk. The Ciscaucasian shores of the Caspian Sea are surrounded by steppes and are flat throughout. They are formed chiefly of the alluvial land of the deltas of the rivers Terek and Kuma. [504]

River System

The rivers of Ciscaucasia rise in the central Caucasus. There are three river basins, corresponding with the three administrative divisions.

The River *Kuban* rises on the northern side of Mount Elbruz. It is formed by the Khursuk and the Uchkulan, which unite at Uchkulan. It retains its character as a mountain stream until it enters the plain at Batalpashinsk, at a height of 1,075 ft. The middle course extends from the Cossack settlement of Nevinnomysk as far as Ekaterinodar. The river bed is wide, but the river itself is a mere streamlet except in times of flood. After the Kuban turns definitely westward the fall is only about 20 inches in a mile.

The largest tributary of the Kuban is the Laba (200 miles), a canal from which at Chamlik irrigates several thousand acres of steppe land. Another large tributary is the Byelaya (150 miles). The Kuban flows by many mouths, forming several islands and *limans* (marshy lagoons), into the Gulf of Kyzyltash. The river is frozen from December to March. In the lower part of its course inundations are frequent, and the district is marshy. [312]

The *Terek* (382 miles) rises on the slopes of Mount Kazbek at Zilga-Khokh, and pierces the mountain range by the Dariel gorge, which it leaves at Vladikav-

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133 kaz, on the high plains to the north of the Caucasus. The Terek bends first north-west, then east, past Mozdok (altitude 441 ft.) and Kislyar (29 ft. below sea-level), and enters the Caspian Sea by several branches. The delta is sixty miles wide, and the river forms large sand-banks opposite its mouths. It does not freeze every year. The chief tributary is the Zunzha, all the others being mere mountain torrents.

On the left bank of the lower river are great steppes, while shifting sand-dunes cover an extensive tract from Mozdok northwards; near the delta is the depression of Kislyar, covered with impenetrable salt morasses, while to the right of the Terek is fertile country.

The *Kuma* (about 400 miles) rises on the northern slope of the Caucasus, and flows by several branches through the sandy steppes towards the Caspian. At times of flood it reaches the sea, but at other seasons its channels disappear in the sandy steppes along the coast. Its tributaries are the Karamyk, Podkumka, and Buivola.

(3) Climate

132 The climate is continental, and in the winter the cold is severe.

Temperature.

	Mean Annual Temp.	*January (Mean).*	*July (Mean).*
Vladikavkaz (altitude 2,345 ft.)	47·7° F.	23° F.	69° F.
Stavropol (altitude 2,030 ft.)	47° F.	24° F.	79° F.
Pyatigorsk	48° F.	25° F.	71° F.

Annual Rainfall.

Terek Province

Mountainous districts	37 in.
Steppes	10 to 20 in.

Vladikavkaz

34·2 in., of which 25·8 in. falls between April and September.

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133 Sea of Azov, is navigable by light-draught steamers for
505 141 miles from its mouth. On the river and the various tributaries forming its basin there are 964 miles of water suitable for floating timber. The *Terek*, which flows into the Caspian, is navigable by light vessels for 112 miles from its mouth, but there is no steamer traffic. Timber can be floated for 320 miles. It has no tributaries of importance.

In Transcaucasia the navigable rivers are the Chorokh and Rion, emptying into the Black Sea, and the Kura, emptying into the Caspian. The *Rion* is navigable for 83 miles from its mouth at Poti, but no steamers can be used. Timber is floated or rafted for 123 miles. The *Kura* is navigable for 390 miles from its mouth, and of this distance 197 miles are suitable for steamers. Including its tributaries, the basin of the Kura provides 1,098 miles of water upon which timber-floating is possible.

[656] All these navigable waters were under the care of the State, which, through the Ministry of Ways and Communications, was responsible for their maintenance and improvement.

There are no navigable canals in the Caucasus. For irrigation canals, see p. 59.

(c) *Railways*

496 In 1912 there were 2,442 miles of railway in the Caucasus. 994 miles being in Ciscaucasia and 1,448 miles in Transcaucasia. These are generally of 5-ft. gauge, and, with certain exceptions indicated below, are of single track.

Principal Railways.—There are two principal railway systems—the Vladikavkaz and the Transcaucasian.
[471] Both were constructed and maintained originally by private companies, but the latter was acquired by the State in 1906.

(i) The main line of the *Vladikavkaz Railway*, 819 miles in length, runs from Rostov-on-Don (where con-

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south-west to Kutais, a distance of 191 miles. It crosses the Caucasian main range by the Mamison Pass. 491

The most important road from west to east is the Kutais–Tiflis–Elisavetopol–Shemakha–Baku road, with a total length of 542 miles. The Kutais–Tiflis section is known as the Imeretian Military Road.

There are also coast roads along the shores of the Black and Caspian Seas:

On the Black Sea coast a metalled road begins at Anapa, passes through Novorossiisk, 30 miles to the south-east, and runs along the coast to Sukhum and Ochemchiri, where it turns inland, dividing at Novo-Senaki into two branches which meet again at Kutais. The coast section was being improved in 1913.

Other roads terminating on the Black Sea coast are the Armavir–Maikop–Tuapse road, 166 miles long, the Akhaltsikh–Batum road, 110 miles long, and the Akhalkalaki–Artvin–Batum road, 200 miles long. The first of these is now to some extent superseded by the recently constructed railway following the same course. Batum lacks road connexions with the north.

Along the Caspian coast there is a road, for the most part unmetalled, from Astrakhan to Baku, a distance of 600 miles; and there is a road, metalled except where it crosses the Vantliashet Pass, from Petrovsk, on the Caspian, to Tiflis.

Road communications between the Caucasus and Russia are very few, the only ones of importance being the above-mentioned road along the Caspian littoral and one from Stavropol to Rostov-on-Don.

(*b*) *Rivers and Canals*

Few of the numerous rivers of the Caucasus are navigable, and those are used to a limited extent only for transport. The floating of timber to the seaboard for shipment is the principal traffic in almost every case. 133 505

In Ciscaucasia the Kuban and the Terek have navigable stretches. The *Kuban*, which flows into the

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INTRODUCTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL

133 "And at day-dawn they looked eastward, and midway between the sea and the sky they saw white snow-peaks hanging, glittering sharp and bright above the clouds. And they knew that they were come to Caucasus at the end of all the earth: Caucasus the highest of all mountains, the father of the rivers of the East. On his peak is chained the Titan, while a vulture tears his heart; and at his feet are piled dark forests round the magic Colchian land."—KINGSLEY'S *Heroes*: The Argonauts.

THE Caucasus Range stretches for a distance of 650 miles in a south-easterly direction from the Taman Peninsula to the neighbourhood of Baku. It may be divided into three sectors. The western sector, 230 miles in length from Taman to Pitsunda, forms the difficult coast, rising in places to 7,000 feet, of Circassia and Abkhazia. The main wall begins east of Pitsunda, on the Black Sea, and extends eastward for 200 miles, with but a few hazardous passes, with no gap under 10,000 feet, and attaining nearly 19,000 and 17,000 feet respectively at the peaks of Elbrus and Shkara. Immediately east of Kazbek (16,000 feet) lies the important pass of Daryal, giving good access from the northern to the soutnern slopes. From the region of Kazbek south-east for 250 miles the bleak hills of Daghestan stretching to the Caspian form the third sector. Innumerable streams, fed by the great glaciers, run north and south of the chain. To the north, the Kuban falling into the Black Sea, and the Kuma and Terek into the Caspian, traverse the salt steppe which once was covered by the waters that united the two seas. To the south, the Ingur and the Rion flow through the fertile Mingrelian Plain to the Black Sea, and the Kur, mingling its waters with the Araxes (Aras) coming from the Armenian Plateau, ends in a swampy delta which finds the Caspian in Aghach Bay south of the Apsheron Peninsula. Between the upper waters of the Rion and Kur the Caucasus throws out the Suram Range, an arm to link with the Armenian system, while, between the Kur and the Aras, Karabagh, a formidable bastion of that system, reaches to within 150 miles of Southern Daghestan. And between the two mountain-masses and their lesser arms nestle the two cuplike depressions of the Rion and Kur Valleys.

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The influence on history of this formidable range of the Caucasus has been profound. To the Ancients the Caucasus represented the confines of geographical knowledge; all that lay beyond was mystery and darkness, "the Land of Gog and Magog." The Caucasus protected Southern Asia like a wall. It divided the Eastern World into two: to the north was the land of the Nomads, while to the south the peoples of the Mesopotamian river-valleys and of the Mediterranean coast-lands developed their civilisations, for centuries undisturbed. And when during the first millennium B.C. the Aryan tribes broke in upon the Mediterranean and Semitic races, the Caucasus, as a rampart along the bridge between the Euxine and the Caspian, deflected their course. The Aryans were compelled, by a great circular movement, to sweep down on Iran and India by the steppes to the east of the Caspian, and to enter Asia Minor by Scythia, Thrace and the Bosporus. A thousand years later a fresh wave of nomads, Teutonic, Slavonic and Turki, found the Caucasus obstructing their road into Persia and Roman Asia, and rode on across Scythia into the Balkans and Western Europe. And after another thousand years Seljuk Turks and Mongols, by breaking into the Perso-Arab Empire on its north-eastern frontier, at last took the wall by a great flank march.

There were two gaps in the mountain-wall which gave possible access to the south to an invader from the north. The first was the deep gorge through the central mountains, the Daryal—Dar-i-Alan, the "Alan road," the Iberian Gates of the Ancients; the second was the swampy littoral of the Caspian, which constituted a passage-way between the mountains and the sea, and which at one point—the Derbend of the Persians, the Bab-al-Abwab of the Arabs, the Caspian Gates of the Romans—narrowed to two miles. These two points every energetic ruler of Iran or Armenia was careful to control. Hence the valley of the Kur constituted a frontier march to the kings of South-west Asia, and its history is mainly a history of war, of incursions by the northern peoples and of counter-attacks against them, or of mutual rivalry for control on the part of the rulers of Iran and Asia Minor.

As the Caucasus was the strategic focus of the struggle between the settled folk of Southern Asia and the nomads of the northern plain, so the Armenian Plateau was the subject of perennial conflict between the rulers of Asia Minor and of Persia. From Lake Gökcha (Sevan) to the Taurus the Armenian passes command all the roads into Persia, Meso-

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potamia, Syria and Egypt, and from the Anti-Taurus to the upper waters of the Halys and the Lycus they give access to all Western Asia Minor, the wealthiest lands of the lords of Constantinople. Thus, both for reasons of trade and of war, neither the rulers of Iran nor of Asia Minor have dared to allow their rival to establish control of the Armenian Plateau. The history of Armenia and the adjacent lands is therefore mainly a record of a tedious and always indecisive struggle for control between their neighbours of the West and of the East. Rome and Parthia, Byzantium and Persia, Byzantium and the Eastern Khalifat, Seljuk and Mongol, Osmanli and Persian, have in turn fought for the control and have wasted their manhood and their wealth in the struggle. In all these wars the valleys of the Rion and the Kur have constituted a route by which the western and eastern combatants have endeavoured alternately to outflank the other.

If these age-long wars were exhausting to the contending Empires, they were disastrous to the peoples inhabiting the disputed lands. They have had a radical effect on the development of the two suffering races, Armenians and Georgians. The history of these two races may be divided into three phases: firstly, the long periods when they were under the political influence, but not under the direct domination, of their eastern, western or northern neighbours; secondly, the shorter period when they were under the actual rule of a foreign race, and formed an integral part either of the Arab, the Byzantine, the Mongol, the Turkish, the Persian or the Russian Empires; and thirdly, the brief periods when political upheavals affecting one or all of their neighbours have allowed them to establish their complete independence.

And if Armenian and Georgian history is mainly a record of treachery, violence and cruelty, it is well to remember that both races were involved in a struggle in which they had no interest, and in which each combatant came as an invader. Also it must be remembered that perpetual warfare prevents the development of all culture, and produces as the dominant types, not the progressive statesman, the enlightened scholar, the prosperous merchant, and the industrious peasant, but the ambitious soldier of fortune, the time-serving politician who must always apprehend a change of masters, the merchant who has no security for his trade and must bribe for his safety, and the peasant driven desperate by oppression, who finds brigandage or service in foreign armies more remunerative than sowing for the invader to reap or burn.

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565 had the right to change masters, and who were protected against arbitrary sale; and the slaves, who were for the most part prisoners of war. Very definite laws regulated the rights and duties of the various castes, and intermarriage was forbidden. On the other hand the princes[1] exercised little real [642] authority; leadership in war was not an hereditary right, but leaders were elected from the families of the princes and nobles by a popular assembly of the four highest classes; while judges were nominated by popular vote, with powers only for a single day.

181 The social organisation of the Cherkesses was in many re-
871 spects anarchical, for not only was every tribe independent, but every noble's household within each tribe. Nevertheless the general conduct of the people was subject to a series of established customs, based on primitive conceptions of chivalry, respect for age, hospitality and blood-vengeance. The sons of nobles were educated in a long and difficult course of knightly training by cadet members of other noble families, who stood in the joint relation to them of tutor and blood-brother. The women had few rights, but the rights of protection by their fathers and husbands were very clearly defined.

101 The eastern tribes occupied the country between the Daryal and the Caspian littoral, and from the right bank of the Terek to the hills overlooking the valleys of the Alazan and the Kur. On the north, inhabiting the highlands of the Terek, the Sunja and the Argun, were the various tribes of Chechens, and the lesser related tribes of the Ingushes, the Kists, the Itskheris and the Galgais. Segregated in unapproachable villages (*auls*) in the depths of primæval beech-forests, the Chechens had a culture which was far less developed than that of the Cherkesses. They had no class system, and lived together in small anarchical communities.

● [638] South-east of the Chechens were the powerful Lesghian tribes, scattered over Daghestan ("The Mountain Country"), which formed an elevated table-land through which innumerable rivers had cut channels to a depth frequently of thousands of feet, the whole being backed and ribbed south and west by mountain chains with several peaks over 13,000 feet in height. The principal Lesghian tribes were the Kubachins and Darghis on the north-east, bordering the Chechen country, the Kazi-Kumukhs of the central plateau, the Kurins and Tabasserans of the south-east, overlooking the Tatar lowlands of Shirvan, and the Avars, Andis and Didos on the west, bordering on Kakhetia.

1 [of the Cherkess--Analyst]

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B. ECONOMICS

IX

THE RESOURCES OF GEORGIA, THE CAUCASUS AND AZERBAIJAN

133 *Climatic Conditions.*—The general characteristics of the geography of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia have already been indicated.[1] To the west are the Euxine, to the east the Caspian depressions. To the north the solid wall of the Caucasian Range, stretching for 650 miles west-north-west to east-south-east, separates the northern steppe from the southern river-valleys. The comparatively low range of the Suram Mountains running from north to south connects the Caucasus with the Pontic or Armenian system and separates the head-waters of the Rion and the Kur. And to the south-east an advanced bastion of the Armenian Mountains dominates the middle reaches of the Kur Valley.

132 Transcaucasia may be divided into three climatic areas. In the west the protection of the great Caucasian Range and of the lesser systems in the east and south has produced in the basin of the Rion a climate which is subtropical. The summers are oppressively hot, and the winters are mild and with little fall of snow. The heavy rains, the annual fall of which averages 60 to 80 inches, combined with the multitude of streams which find their way to the marshy Mingrelian coast, produce an atmosphere of extreme humidity. Hence, whilst the soil is fertile and sub-tropical, and fruits and vegetation flourish, the health of the inhabitants suffers, and malaria, with its consequent enervation of physique and *moral*, is prevalent. To the east, in the Kur Valley, the Suram Range breaks the force of rain-clouds drifting over from the Black Sea, while the parching winds of Central Asia blow across the Caspian and raise in the Baku region the most violent sand- and dust-storms. Kakhetia and Karthalinia are adequately

[1] Vide pp. 169–171.

7: Columbia U.
133

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/For data on physical geography and geology of Caucasus, see category 116, pp. 23-106; 121-130; 137-174; 182; 184-189./

103 Caucasians also call the Pontos the "Black Sea" (Georgian Šavi Zγva).

Later, in Arabic and Persian geographical and historical literature, forms of the name of these mountains such as Qabaq, Qabuq (?) appear, and a similar form Qāf or Qāp, becomes the general term for the Caucasus throughout the Near and Middle Eastern Islamic world (in Turkic Qāf daγlary, etc.), forms which have some slightly remote relationship with the old Iranian and Western term.

181 For a long time the Caucasus was, and
132 in a certain sense still is, a great divide between two rather different worlds: on the one hand, Trans-Caucasia, which is culturally Mediterranean and Near Eastern, and climatically arid and sub-tropical; and on the other, the North-Caucasian plains, a cultural no-man's land, the transitory roaming-grounds of nomadic peoples, and climatically belonging to the continental zone of the vast East European plains. The steppes of the northern
133 Caucasian triangle between Don-Volga and the
167 Caucasus have been, down to the last two centuries, the battlefields between ever-changing nomadic conquest groups, arriving one after the other in an almost unending sequence out of the high plains of Central and Eastern Asia, trying to force their way into the territories of the Persian or the Roman Empires, which had their outer defenses established in these plains. But even prior to those movements,

133 which start with the Great Migrations, and
167 during which, time and again, conquering peoples forced their way around or even through the Caucasus Mountains, the North Caucasian steppes and Caucasian lands were the scene of movements of entire nations or of organized armies of one or the other of early Mediterranean or Near Eastern empires. But they found the huge range an insurmountable barrier closing off the entire isthmus between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea from one end to the other. And it proved very difficult to circumvent this huge natural fortificatory wall because of the narrow passage between mountains and seashore. While the west coast offers the greatest obstacles, the east coast has on its longer extent, along the mountains fanning out towards the northern Caspian basin, a slightly larger strip of land which would serve as a pathway--with only one narrow spot where the fortress of Derbent (Darubanda in Georgian, from Old-Iranian Daru-banda, "door-band" or "closed doors") is situated, built at a very early epoch.

144 The Caucasus is not only a divide but a refuge as well for ethnic groups which have succumbed to pressure, and have had to retreat from large valleys or plains where they were being attacked or gradually displaced and finally doomed either to extinction or flight. Like the Alps, the Elburz, the Hindukush, or Himalaya Mountains, the Caucasus shelters relic peoples from groups which a

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
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bacco, and canned goods (vegetables, fruits, and fish). Imports involve coal from the Donets Basin, petroleum from the Caucasus, lumber from Belorussia and the Caucasus, textiles from Moscow and Ivanovo oblasts, and butter from the European North. 438*

Simferopol', the former capital of the Crimean Autonomous SSR and the present administrative seat of the oblast, lies in the center of the peninsula, amidst the forested steppe of the foothills. It has fruit- and vegetable-canning plants and produces canning machinery. Tobacco, fish, and wheat are also processed here.

Sevastopol', in the southwestern part of the Crimea, is an important naval base and possesses the best natural harbor on the Black Sea. Rail terminus and center for an electrotechnical industry of some importance, Sevastopol' is noted for the sieges of 1854–56 during the Crimean War and of 1941–42 during the Second World War. It became a city of republic rank in 1948, subordinated directly to the Russian SFSR government.

Feodosiya, or Theodosia, is a grain-exporting and fishing port on the southeast coast. It produces tobacco, flour, canned fish products, and wines. Known as Kaffa in the Middle Ages, it still possesses remains of Genoese walls.

Kerch', the metallurgical center at the east end of the Kerch' peninsula, also produces canning machinery, meat, tobacco, and canned fish. It ships iron ore that is mined at Kamysh-Burun, just southwest of the city.

Yalta, one of the most famous resorts of the USSR, lies on the subtropical south coast amid a large number of lesser year-round resorts. Extending eastward along the coast are Gurzuf, near the dome-shaped mountain of Ayu-Dag, and the wine-producing centers of Alushta and Sudak. To the west are Livadiya, scene of the Big Three conference in February, 1945, Gaspra, Koreiz, Alupka, and Simeiz. Adjoining Yalta are the famous vineyards of Massandra.

Yevpatoriya, or Eupatoria, a salt-shipping port on the west coast, engages in meat packing and has flour and clothing mills.

Lower Don and Northern Caucasus

SU 133* C 133

The region known as the Northern Caucasus includes the northern slopes and foothills of the Greater Caucasus range and the level fertile steppes adjoining the Kuban' and the Terek rivers to the north. The steppes of the Lower Don are usually associated with the Northern

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Caucasus not only because of their contiguity and common geographical factors but also because they were both settled by the Cossacks. The region is bounded by the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov in the west and by the Caspian Sea in the east. In the northeast its geographical boundary is the Kuma-Manych Depression, which once formed a connection between the Sea of Azov and the Caspian and is sometimes regarded as the natural dividing line between Europe and Asia. The combined area of the Lower Don * and the Northern Caucasus is more than 188,000 square miles.

North of the Kuban'-Terek line lies the steppe region of the Northern Caucasus, a level lowland which rises in the center to 2,715 feet in the Stavropol' upland, the northernmost outlier of the Greater Caucasus. West of the upland the steppes form a continuation of the Black Sea lowland; east of the elevation are the Caspian steppes and semi-deserts. The upland itself is deeply cut by numerous river valleys and ravines which divide it into separate plateau masses. South of the Stavropol' upland lies the northernmost of the three ranges which the Greater Caucasus forms in its western part, the so-called Black Mountains (Russian *Chernyye Gory*). These mountains are of the laccolite type, of partly eroded sedimentary formation; the highest points are Beshtau (4,725 feet) and Mashuk (3,940 feet). Connected with the volcanic character of these mountains are the famous mineral springs in the adjacent area of Pyatigorsk, Zheleznovodsk, and Kislovodsk.

The Greater Caucasus extends from the Apsheron peninsula in the Azerbaijan SSR 685 miles northwest to the Taman peninsula on the Black Sea. It has low hills at the two extremities and exceeds the highest Alpine peaks in its central section. At ten points it rises above the elevation of Mont Blanc. The gradual northern slopes and the abrupt southern side branch off into lateral ranges, which sometimes run parallel to the main divide. Many of the major peaks, including Mt. El'brus (18,476 feet), the highest point of the Caucasus and of Europe, lie in these lateral ranges. The western section of the Greater Caucasus, west of Mt. El'brus, is made up predominantly of limestone formations having an average elevation ranging from 2,000 to 12,000 feet and gives rise to the Kuban' River in the north and to several short streams in the south. In the central section occur Paleozoic crystalline formations, together with igneous rocks, which over large stretches are covered by snow fields

* The region of the lower Don River is discussed under Rostov Oblast, with which it is coterminous.

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Caucasia RH1

SU 133 C 133 and glaciers. Here Mt. El'brus and Mt. Kazbek (16,541 feet), two extinct volcanoes, are evidence of the considerable volcanic activity which accompanied the folding processes. In this portion of the Greater Caucasus rise the Terek River, in the north, and the Rion River, in the south. East of Mt. Kazbek the main divide is formed primarily of Jurassic beds and nowhere exceeds 14,750 feet. The glaciers gradually decrease in size. They disappear altogether near the Caspian Sea, where the Greater Caucasus becomes a low range of hills rising to 1,075 feet. The northern spurs of this section of the Caucasus form an extensive mountain region known as Dagestan. The chief rivers here are the Sulak in the north and in the south the left affluents of the Kura River.

The Kuban' and the Terek are the main rivers of the Northern Caucasus. Due to their mountain origin, high water occurs in the summer when snow and ice melt in the high altitudes. The force of the current washes out the upper valleys, and in depositing the sediments in the lower course it forms sand banks, which render these streams useless for navigation. They are, however, important for irrigation and as a source of hydroelectric power. In their lower reaches these rivers form large swampy deltas, with many lakes and channels, overgrown with reeds and other marsh vegetation. The large quantities of sediment carried by the Terek act to enlarge the delta from year to year.

SU 132 C 132 The climate of the Northern Caucasus is of the continental type and is exposed to a series of opposing air mass movements from the west, bringing moisture from the Black Sea and from the east, where they originate in the dry desert regions of Central Asia. Although the winters are short, they are severe, and frosts of below 0° F occur frequently. Spring arrives at the end of February and soon turns into a hot summer. Most of the precipitation occurs in the summer and is greater in the west and in the high altitudes. The heaviest rainfall takes place on the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus near the Black Sea (up to 25 inches yearly); in the Kuma-Manych Depression to the northeast, precipitation is less than 12 inches a year. The climate of the Greater Caucasus range, while it varies, depending on the elevation and the location, is marked by a steady decrease of precipitation from west to east.

SU 137 C 137 In accordance with the amount of precipitation, the type of vegetation varies throughout the region. The western ranges are covered with deciduous forests, with oak and beech, while the eastern highlands of Dagestan are nearly treeless. At lower altitudes begins the oak forest

The Donets ridge, the major portion lying within the Ukraine, penetrates the oblast between the lower Don and its right affluent, the Northern Donets. It is a plateau of limestone and sandstone, which is deeply dissected by river courses and ravines. On the higher points burial mounds of the ancient steppe dwellers are often found. The villages, normally surrounded by gardens and orchards, lie along the ravines and valleys of small streamlets. A similar landscape is represented by the outliers of the Central Russian upland to the north. The Don steppe, on the contrary, constitutes very level terrain. The wide river valleys, where streams proceed with a sluggish current, are often filled with salt lakes, and salt flats frequently break the expanse of black-earth and chestnut soils which characterize the region. Toward the east the relief gradually merges with the features of the Caspian lowland.

Normally the Don is not a very abundant river, but spring freshets raise its level considerably. At its mouth, on the Taganrog Gulf of the Sea of Azov, it forms a large delta, which, together with the shallow waters of the adjoining sea, abounds in fish of many varieties.

The climate is continental, with hot summers and severe, snowless winters. Precipitation varies from 16 inches annually in the west to 12 inches in the east and occurs chiefly in the summer months, in frequent heavy downpours. Easterly prevailing winds blowing in the spring and summer from the dry steppes and deserts of Central Asia and Kazakhstan present a serious danger of drought to the crops. Drought conditions are especially marked in the southeast, along the Sal River, where black earth is largely replaced by chestnut soils. In the well-watered flood plain of the lower Don, alluvial pastures are important for the raising of dairy cattle.

The eastern wing of the Donets Basin penetrates into the oblast along the Northern Donets River. Anthracite predominates in this area and represents about one fifth of the total reserves of the basin. The major coal-mining centers are Shakhty and Novoshakhtinsk. Other coal mines are concentrated in the areas of Gukovo, north of Krasnyy Sulin, and Gundorovka, west of Kamensk-Shakhtinskiy. In the Bogurayev coal field, at the intersection of the Northern Donets River and the Likhaya-Stalingrad railroad, coal is mined at Koksovyy (characteristically named for coke) north of the railroad and at Sinegorskiy to the south. Belaya Kalitva, at the center of this field, has limestone and glassworks. Anthracite dust from the mines is used to feed the power station of Artemovskiy, an eastern suburb of Shakhty, and the Nesvetay station

The entire Kray, with the exception of the mountains in the South and the dry steppes in the east, is covered with black earth of the highest grade. The soil conditions and the warm, humid summer climate combine to make the Kuban' region one of the most fertile agricultural regions of the USSR, able to provide a large number of products. In the southwest, along the Black Sea littoral, the subtropical, winterless climate favors the growth of citrus fruits, tea, and similar warm-weather crops. The mountainous portion of the region also presents factors favorable to the development of the economy. The left affluents of the Kuban', the Belaya, the Laba, and the Urup rivers, as well as the upper course of the Kuban' itself are potential sources of hydroelectric power. A rich petroleum-bearing area extends from the Taman' peninsula to the Belaya River along the northern foothills of the Greater Caucasus. Along the Black Sea, southeast of Novorossiysk, extensive marl deposits furnish an important basis for the cement industry. The region also includes the forested slopes of the Caucasus that are covered with oak and chestnut, two valuable types of wood. The Sea of Azov, finally, is rich in fish along the shallow northwest coast of Krasnodar Kray.

The population of the region is predominantly Russian. It includes also large numbers of Ukrainians and Adyge (Cherkess or Circassians), the latter being organized into an autonomous oblast. The Cossacks are concentrated in large villages along the Kuban' River.

The Russian settlement and consequent economic development received their most vigorous impetus from the construction of the Rostov-Baku railroad in the 1870's. During the twenty-five years following the completion of the line the population of the Kuban' district increased twice, and the area under cultivation fivefold. Mechanization was introduced early by the well-to-do peasants, who owned most of the land prior to collectivization. After the adoption of rationalized agriculture, spring wheat and sunflowers were assigned to the dry northern steppes, where the black-earth and chestnut soils suffer from drought in summer and are covered only by a thin snow cover in the winter months. The richest agricultural area lies along the Kuban' River. There, among vast expanses under winter wheat, barley, and corn, large areas are producing garden produce, melons and pumpkins, and fodder crops. The principal old industrial crops are sunflower and tobacco; during recent years cotton, *kenaf*, soy beans, castor beans, and essential-oil-bearing plants were introduced. Rice has been acclimatized in the swampy lowlands bordering on the Kuban', between Krasnodar and the delta. Livestock raising is more intensive here than it is along the Don and in the

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Maykop on the Belaya River at the north foot of the Caucasus, is the center of the oil field of Neftegorsk and Apsheronsk, more than 30 miles southwest. The city has a small-scale metallurgical industry and produces machine tools, agricultural and lumbering machinery, furniture, tobacco, canned goods, and meat. A 438

Stavropol' Kray

Capital, Stavropol'; area, 29,600, population, 1,500,000

SU 133* C 133

Stavropol' Kray reaches to the crest of the Greater Caucasus only in its extreme southwestern portion along the upper Urup, a left affluent of the Kuban'. The basic portion of the region lies in the northern foothills of the Caucasus, the so-called Stavropol' upland, and in the dry steppes to the northeast. The watershed between the Caspian and the Black Sea basins passes roughly along the Stavropol' meridian, near the western border of the kray. Due to this circumstance, only a narrow strip of territory along the western boundary receives the benefit of the humid westerly winds blowing from the Black Sea. The rest of the area, east of the Stavropol' upland, is characterized by a dry climate. The yearly precipitation decreases from 16 inches in the west to 8 inches in the east; insolation and summer heat are very pronounced. Consequently, water courses are poorly developed, and trees are entirely absent. In the western and central portions fertile black-earth and chestnut soils predominate; only in the extreme east does the region have a semi-desert character.

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The population of the region is predominantly Russian, with a strong Ukrainian admixture. In the southwest lives another section of the Cherkess, or Circassian, ethnic group, which is organized into the Cherkess Autonomous Oblast. This region, now known as Stavropol' Kray, was first organized within its present approximate limits in 1924, when it was called North Caucasus Kray. In 1937 it was renamed Ordzhonikidze Kray; it received its present designation in 1943. Prior to the Second World War, it also included the Karachay Autonomous Oblast, a division located in the southwest on the slopes of the Greater Caucasus. This autonomous unit, with an area of 3,800 square miles and a population of 150,000, had been constituted in 1926, when it was separated from the original Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Oblast (formed in 1922). The Karachay, a Turkic people who constituted about one half of the population of the autonomous unit, were among those accused of collaboration with the Germans during the Second World War. In 1943 the nationality was abrogated, the people were dis-

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CHAPTER 22

Transcaucasia

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TRANSCAUCASIA is one of the southernmost regions of the USSR, extending over an area of 74,000 square miles south of the Greater Caucasus range. It is bordered by the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and adjoins Turkey and Iran in the south. Besides being one of the warmest and richest areas of the Soviet Union, it presents a great variety of widely contrasting land forms, which occur in close proximity and range from luxuriant subtropical forests to dry desert-steppes and from the warm blue sea to the eternal snows of the high ranges, which are punctuated by the gigantic regular cones of extinct volcanoes. There are sections in which insufficient rainfall necessitates the use of irrigation for agriculture; in others precipitation is as plentiful as in humid subtropical countries, and the palm tree, the orange tree, and the tea bush are representative vegetation types.

Transcaucasia includes the steep southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus range* in the north and the mountain region commonly known as the Armenian plateau, in the south. These two folded sections are separated by a synclinal zone, which is formed by the basins of the Rion and the Kura rivers. In the center the Surami range, oriented north and south, forms a connection between the elevated areas of the region. Separated from the principal mountain systems and lying in the extreme southeast of Transcaucasia are the Talysh mountains, which constitute an extension of the Elburz mountains of Iran.

The Armenian plateau consists of a number of individual highlands rising from 5,000 to 6,800 feet and separated from each other by minor ranges. The highest section of the Armenian plateau, the Karabakh upland, lies southeast of the large Lake Sevan (or Gokcha) and reaches an altitude of 8,300 feet. The major portion of the bordering mountain ranges is commonly known as the Lesser Caucasus and extends from the Surami range. These crests nowhere reach the snow line, and they

*The Greater Caucasus range is discussed in Chapter 11.

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TRANSCAUCASIA

133* C ●133 rise above 10,000 feet only in the southern section. Volcanism plays an important role in this region. There are a number of extinct volcanoes, including the 13,500 feet high Mount Aragats (or Alagez). The greater part of the Armenian plateau is covered with extrusive volcanic rocks, including eroded basaltic formations. Mineral springs occur throughout the area, and destructive earthquakes often create great havoc; the most recent disaster was in 1926 at Leninakan.

The Rion River basin faces the Black Sea. Its lowest section along the coast is known as Kolkhida (ancient Colchis); it consists largely of marshes and lagoons. Recently this area has been the site of a large reclamation-drainage project. The Kura River basin, which includes the major part of eastern Transcaucasia, is a large alluvial plain drained by the Kura and the Aras (Russian *Araks*) rivers. It is essentially a sterile steppe in the central section, punctuated by occasional salt flats and changing into more fertile black earth on the lower slopes of the northern and southern highlands.

SU 132 C 132 The Rion lowland has a humid subtropical climate, with a warm winter—the January average at Batumi is 43° F—a hot, humid summer, and a very heavy rainfall (100 inches a year at Batumi). Precipitation occurs chiefly in the summer, when moisture-laden winds blow from the Black Sea. This circumstance makes the local climate unlike the Mediterranean type, and classifies it rather with the monsoon climates of East Asia (Japan and southern China). The winters are extremely mild along the Black Sea coast; occasionally there are frosts in January, but they are not severe and are of short duration.

Eastern Transcaucasia, including the Kura lowland, has a more continental climate, due principally to the barrier of the Surami range, which bars the warm Black Sea winds from this area. The winters are rather warm, but frosts occur more often, and temperatures drop lower than in the west. Summer is hot, and there is much less precipitation (about 15 inches) than on the Black Sea. In the extreme southeast the Lenkoran' lowland at the foot of the Talysh range again has a humid subtropical climate. The Talysh range condenses the humid Caspian Sea air and produces considerable precipitation in the coastal plain.

The Armenian plateau, in the south, has a continental climate. The local winters are as cold there as in the northern half of the European USSR. At Yerevan (elevation: 3,300 feet), frosts are as low as —18° F, and in July temperatures rise to 104° F. The amount of rainfall varies

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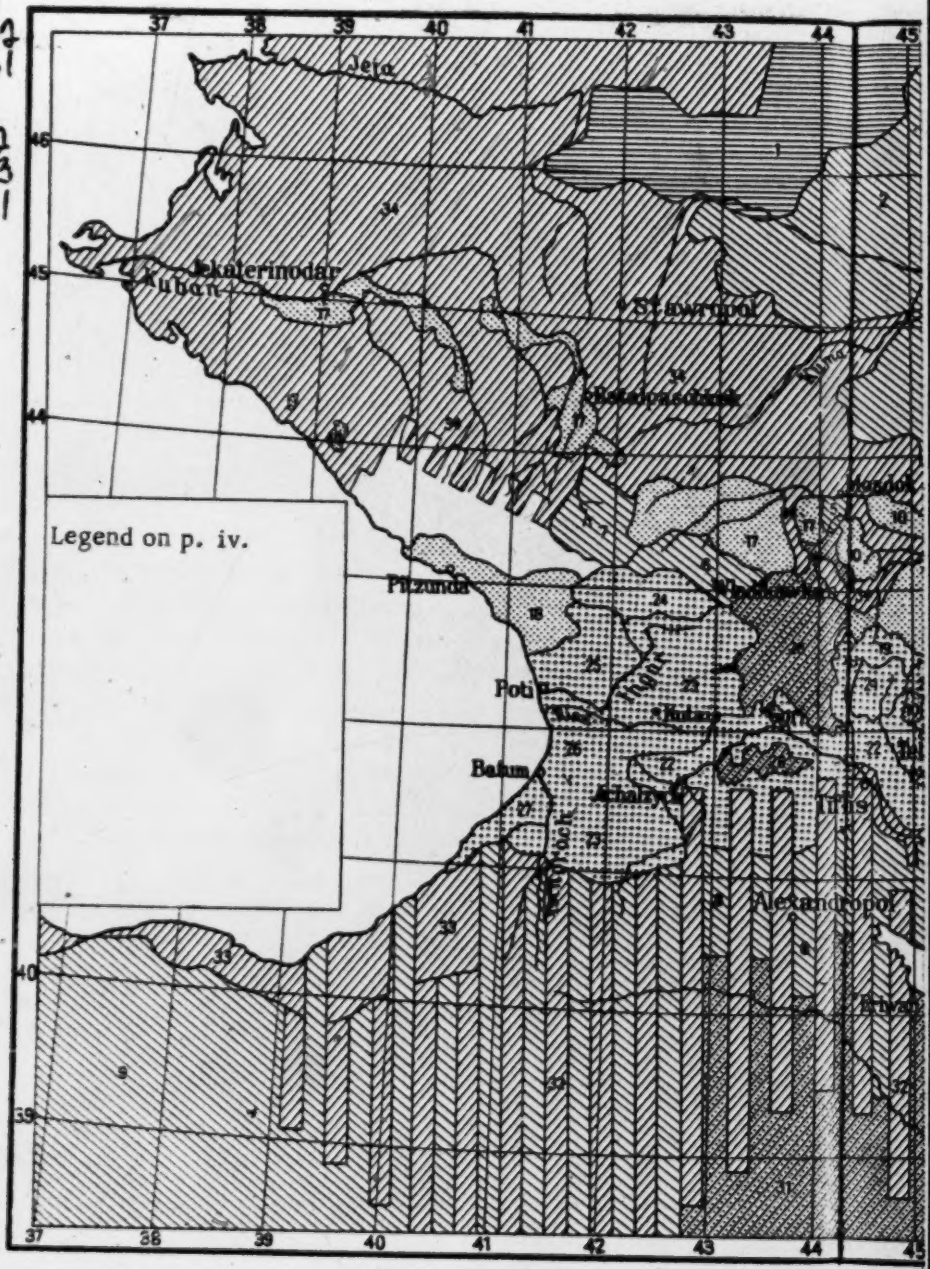

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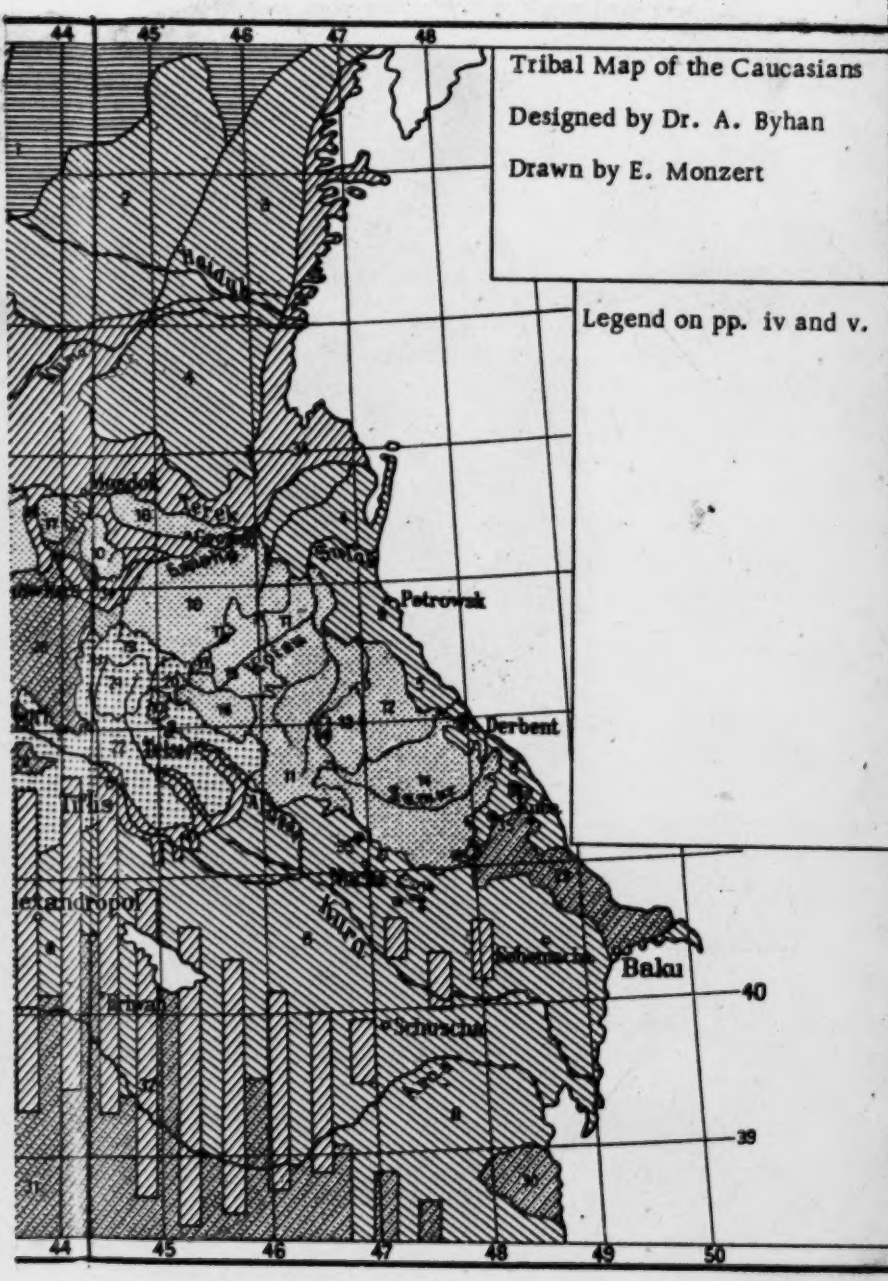

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MONGOL:

1 Kalmyk

TURKS:

2 Turkmen /Turcoman/
3 Kirgis /Kirgiz/
4 Nogai
5 Kymyk /Kumyk/
6 Taulu
7 Karatschai /Karachai/
8 Aserbaidshan Tatar /Azerbaijani Tatar/
9 Osman

CAUCASIANS:

10 Tschetschen /Chechen/
LESGHIER: /Lezgin/
11 Awar /Avar/
12 Dargin
13 Lak /Lek/
14 Kürin /Kurin/
15 Andi
16 Dido /Didol/

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17 Tscherkess /Cherkess/
18 Abchas /Abkhaz/

KHARTHWELIER /Karthvelians/

19 Chewsur /Khevsur/
20 Thusch /Tush/
21 Pschaw /Pshav/
22 Georgier /Grusians/
23 Jmerier /Imeretin/
24 Swan
25 Mingrel
26 Gurier /Gurian/
27 Las /Laz/

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JRANIER /IRANIANS/:

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28 Ossen /Osset/
29 Tat
30 Talysch /Talysh/
31 Kurd

32 Armenians
33 Greeks
34 Russians

SEMITES:

35 Mountain Jews